have all seen such villages. We know such villages. Now it is a question whether in those areas where fluoride content is already high we could educate the people not to use fluoride toothpaste if they have been using it. As I said, it is very, very rarely that anybody would be using any toothpaste in those villages. But may be in some towns like Nalgonda and other district headquarters and taluk headquarters some people would be using it. To that extent I agree that there is need for educating the people not to use fluoride toothpaste because the fluoride which they are taking by way of water is already high. That can be done and that should be done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 286. People have more interest in this than in fluoride.

AN HON. MEMBER: She is absent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What a pity.

*286. [*The Questioner (Shrimati Ratan Kumari) was absent. For answer is vide col. 32 in fra.*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 287.

Casual Workers in Railways

*287. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA: SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:†

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of casual workers in each Zonal Railway as on 1st January, 1985 and 1st January, 1986 and the number of them who are being allowed to continue in service after giving breaks, to get over the rules for regular employment get over the rules for regular employment; and

(b) the number of them who continue to work after being given two or more breaks, Zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): (a) and (b) A statment is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) (i). The number of casual labourers working as on 1.1.1985 and 1.1.1986 on various Zonal Railways and Production Units is as under:—

Railway/Production unit	As on 1-1-1985	As on 1-1-1986
Central	38,672	37,618
Eastern	18,856	21,561
Northern	47,842	47,554‡
North-Eastern	16,541	16,384
Northeast Frontier	10,317	9,403‡
Southern	26,945	25,118
South Central	20,746*	19,677‡
South Eastern	18,682	16,023
Western	25,377	21,750

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Lal K. Advani.

‡Figures are Provisional.

Railway/Production	As on 1-1-1985	As on 1-11-986
Diesel Locomotive Works	51	14
Chittaranjan Locomotive Works	Nil	Nil
Integral Coach Factory	374	411
Diesel Component Works	427	490
Northeast Frontier (Construction)	4,614	4,419
Metro Railway, Calcutta	1,470*	1,552*
Railway Electrification Allahabad	4,339*	4,761*
Wheel & Axle Plant	384	51
Rail Coach Factory	..	9

(ii) As per extent instructions, no casual labour is discharged with a view to causing deliberate break in service. In fact, breaks are not relevant, as the total length of service rendered in all spells is aggregated and counted for the purpose of grant of temporary status as also later for absorption in regular employment.

(b) Statistics of breaks in service are not maintained at the Railway Board's level and are available only at the recruitment unit levels. However, such breaks are not relevant for grant of temporary status or for regular employment because (as stated in reply to Part (a) (ii) above), the length of service in all spells is aggregated and counted.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I recall that on the 8th of May, 1984, that is more than two years back, on the floor of this House we discussed this issue of caual labour at length during the Question Hour and the then Minister of Railways, Mr. Ghani Khan Choudhury had said that we will gradually try to do away with the contract system and do things departmentally. I would like to know what progress has been made specifically in pursuance of this assurance. How much casual labour during the last two years has been done away with and things have started being done departmentally? I have not been able to add up the figures that you have given. I wonder whether the total number of casual labourers working in various production units is not more than what it was when that discussion took place. And I have those figures with me. It says that on the 31st March, 1983; there were 2.35 lakh casual labour on the Indian Railways. I do not know if the number has increased since then.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: I have given the number of casual labour in every zone which you have asked for. You are talking about an assurance which was given in the House by my predecessor. Now, the position is that there are two types of casual labour. One is project casual labour and the other is non-project casual labour. And the break of service is another thing. But I will give you the number ...

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Has it increased or decreased?

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: I cannot say whether it has decreased or increased. There are two types of things. We absorb the casual labour against the vacancies. And the other thing is that if they have done 120 days' service with breaks or

without breaks, they are given temporary status.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The point Mr. Advanj made is this that your predecessor gave an assurance that there will be progressive reduction in the casual labour. Is it reduced or increased? What is the position?

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: In 1982-83 twenty thousand casual labour were absorbed. After that, 80,000 we have absorbed in last years. But I will give you the exact figure because at present I have no exact number.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Astronomical figures are there.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Sir, if I may make my point clear...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Advani will put a second supplementary.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not concerned so much with the figures as with the policy and approach and I have with me—there is no occasion—scores of statements by our former Labour Minister, Mr. Anjiah, in which he has accepted that contract labour is the worst form of exploitation so far as workers are concerned. Only recently the Supreme Court set up a three member panel to go into the question of alleged prevalence of bonded labour in Kodaikanal and there too they said that "all the evils of exploitation of workers arise out of contract system and the sooner this system is abolished the better it is:" It is against this background so far as the railways are concerned, when last year the Central Advisory Contract labour Board had recommended that contract Labour employed in coal and ash units in loco sheds be abolished the railways declined to do so on the ground of financial difficulties. Now, it seems there is a contradiction between the labour ministry's policy and the railway ministry's policy, it is to that I am objecing and not so much to the figures. You may not have the figures. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the policy that they want to progressively abolish the contract labour continues, and that we do everything departmentally as had been assured by her predecessor in this House. That is my question. And, if so, whether in these two years any steps have been taken in that direction.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Sir, as you know this question was relating to casual workers in each zonal railway as on January 1, 1985 and 1986. Now the Member is asking for labour policy, what is the labour policy and what are the view of the Railway Ministry the policy which was taken up by the Railway Ministry or my predecessor, I think the same policy is going on and I think the Railway Ministry is the only Ministry which is giving casual labour a temporary status and we are giving them more than what the labour is receiving in other departments.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: How does it explain the railway ministry's declining to accept the recommendation made by the Central Advisory Contract Labour Board? Obviously the policy is not accepted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Advani, your question relates to casual workers. And contract workers and casual workers are two different categories.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: My esteemed colleague, Mr. Advani, has pointed out the assurance given by the earlier railway minister in this House three years back. He had then categorically assured that this casual labour system will be abolished and all these people will be regularised. Now, Sir, from the statement furnished by the Hon. Minister it is found that in very many cases the number of casual labour has actually increased, as, for example, in the Eastern railway from eighteen thousand something, now it is gone to twentyone thousand something, between this one year. So, in other cases also there has been an increase like, metro railway. So, Sir, my point is

that two years back the hon. Minister gave an assurance that the system will be eliminated, so far as I remember. Instead of elimination, it has not even been reduced. On the contrary the number of casual labourers in different railways is on the increase. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has taken up any comprehensive scheme of regularising the entire labour force in casual employment and, if so, what is the scheme, and by when are you going to complete the regularisation of the entire casual labour force.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: It is a new question.

AN HON. MEMBER: The question Hour is over.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am going by my electronic clock. The time is not yet over.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is the reply?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mohsinaji, do you want to say anything?

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: I cannot say anything as to when we are going to eliminate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have time enough to ask a question, but not the answer.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I will only ask Madam to see whether the policy that the Government took up earlier, namely, the policy of de-casualisation will that be continued or not.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Sir, the hon. Minister should answer 'yes' or 'no'.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Ministers are casual. What will happen? Decasualisation of Ministers will have to take place.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Complimentary Railway Passes

*286. SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria laid down for the issue of complimentary railway passes; and

(b) the number of railway complimentary passes issued under each category during 1985-86?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): (a) Complimentary Passes are issued, based on the guidelines/justification and merit of each case.

(b) 25 Complimentary Card Passes and 382 Complimentary Cheque Passes were issued during 1985-86.

Grant-in-aid Programme for development of roads

*288. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government sponsored a grant-in-aid programme for development of roads of economic and inter-State importance;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof with reference to the State of Andhra Pradesh and what is the yearly release to the State Government under the scheme for the years 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85;

(c) whether the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has recently written a letter to adopt the 1969 pattern of grant-in-aid and whether any proposal for 36 works worth Rs. 1860 lakhs was also sent to Central Government under the scheme; and